

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in the present application. The Examiner has required election from among the following alleged species:

Group I: Embodiment 1, represented by figures 1 and 2;

Group II: Embodiment 2, represented by figure 3;

Group III: Embodiment 3, represented by figure 4;

Group IV: Embodiment 4, represented by figures 5 and 6;

Group V: Embodiment 5, represented by figures 7, 8 and 9;

Group VI: Embodiments 6 and 7, represented by figures 10, 11, 12 and 13;

Group VII: Embodiment 8, represented by figure 14.

Merely for the purpose of responding to the requirement, Applicants elect, with traverse, what the Examiner has identified as Species II. At least claims 1, 4-5, 13 and 15 read on the elected species. At least claims 1 and 13 are generic.

The requirement for election of species is traversed on the basis that it is fundamentally improper. As is clear from a perusal of claims in the application, claim 1 is an independent apparatus claim. Claims 2-12 and 25 depend on claim 1. Claim 13 is an independent method claim. Claims 14-22 and 26 depend on claim 13. What the Examiner characterizes as independent species are, more accurately, claims of different scope directed to what is properly characterized as a single inventive concept.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully urge that all of the claims in the application should be examined on the merits at this time.

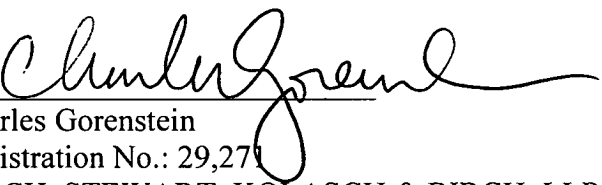
Additionally, whatever decision is made with respect to the election of species requirement, claims 23 and 24 should be examined on the merits at this time. The Examiner has presented no basis whatsoever for declining to treat claims 23-24 on their merits in the next Office Action.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Charles Gorenstein, Registration No. 29,271 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: February 11, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Charles Gorenstein
Registration No.: 29,271
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant